

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH I. 18.

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ON THE DIFFICULTIES AND DISCOURAGEMENTS, WHICH ATTEND THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

(Concluded from page 193.)

Let me observe one thing more, that it is the misfortune of a clergyman that he is confined to one profession. Other men, if they cannot live in one way, are at liberty to try another; but a man who has once the indelible character, must live by the one profession he has made his choice. If therefore that livelihood be taken from him, it is in vain he has learning, parts, industry, and application. He will not be allowed to take any other course to repair the loss he suffers by his opinions as a clergyman. His time, and fortune, and studies have been spent to make him useful in that one profession; and, if he had abilities to maintain himself in any other, it is too late; he has made his choice, and must abide by it. This then is the unhappy dilemma a reputed heretic is reduced to; he will neither be suffered to *keep* the profession, nor to *leave* it; he shall neither live *in it*, nor *out of it*. So that, notwithstanding his learning, parts, virtue, and industry; though he could make a good lawyer, physician, merchant, or mechanic; if he be not orthodox, all possibilities of living comfortably, at least, and reputably, are taken from him. Go now, and think, if you can, that the advice I give you is not the advice of a friend. It is the advice of one who loves virtue and learning, who is a friend to all good men, and is in particular greatly concerned for your advancement in the world. It is advice seconded by the examples of the greatest men; for name me any one of the men most famed for learning in this or the last age, who has seriously turned himself to the study of the scriptures. I might name to you the most eminent men down from Scaliger and Casaubon to the present time. Capellus, indeed, and the excellent Grotius, are exceptions; but they met with such usage, that one has little encouragement from their examples. But not to go beyond our own country; who are the men that have excelled most (excepting always Sir Isaac Newton) in philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics? Have they not been clergymen? And was not their skill, in these sciences, the effect of their great and constant application to them? Was not that time spent in these studies, that you think should have been applied to the study of the scriptures? On the other hand, take out two or three from so great a body, and where is there a clergyman of a great genius, and that has made a chief figure in the learned world, that has written upon the scripture, at least with any masterly skill in criticism?

And what is it that all this can be imputed to? Did these learned men decline this study, because they wanted the abilities proper for it? Surely that will not be said of men of their confessed learning. Or was there want of inclination and good will to it? No, they were men of virtue, and good protestants, as well as scholars and men of letters. What then? Did they, who have taken so much pains upon other books, and with so much success, think the scriptures the only ones that needed not their help? Neither can that be pretended. They saw the sacred books, through the injury of time and the ignorance of scribes,

had suffered as well as others; and much more by false and absurd interpretations. To be plain; the one thing, that turned them from so noble and necessary a study, was the want of *liberty*, which, in this study only, is denied men. They found it was dangerous to examine impartially, and speak freely; that they must write without liberty, or with no safety; that it would be expected of them, to ~~state all the~~ without learning, to ~~pervert~~ and pollute gross errors, instead of exposing or mending them; and to support the received interpretations, however absurd, instead of such as reason and learning convinced them were the only true ones. But this was a task, which men of ingenuous minds, whose integrity and love of truth were equal to their penetration and great abilities, could not submit to. For men to have eyes and understandings of their own, and yet not see or understand, but as they were bid, and that by men who could not see or understand themselves;—To make such a blind use of their learning and abilities was, they thought, to pervert the very end of them, and really to dishonor God, whose service they were given for. Since therefore they could not bear the thoughts of studying the scriptures on these terms, no part was left men who could not be idle, but to turn to some other study, in which, without fear of danger or offence, they might freely go whither truth and reason led. The consequence of which, besides the improvements made in arts and sciences, has been, that many of them have separately made more good emendations, and happily explained more difficulties in the smallest pagan writer, than they have done, take them all together, in two hundred years, upon the whole body of the scriptures.

What then I would advise you is, to follow such examples. And yourself to study, of the greatest historians, poets, orators, and philosophers. Spend ten or twelve years upon Horace or Terence. To illustrate a billet-doux, or a drunken catch; to explain an obscene jest; to make a happy emendation on a passage, that a modest man would blush at, will do you more credit, and be of greater service to you, than the most useful employment of your time upon the scriptures, unless you can resolve to conceal your sentiments, and speak always with the vulgar. You see a present example in the great Bentley; what a reputation has he acquired by the noble edition he has given us of Horace? How are his abilities confessed and admired by all?—But had the same genius, the same sagacity and labor, been applied to the study of the scriptures, to settle the texts in doubtful places, to mend corrupted ones, explain hard ones, fix the meaning of obscure ones, and to trace out the literal sense where it can be done; should he, I say, have attempted a work of this kind; instead of thanks and applause, it is more than probable he would have been treated as a rash man, of no judgment, of little learning, and less religion; and if his works had been sentenced to the flames, a majority would have been for throwing him in after them.

Consider well, therefore, how you engage where there is no retreat, no repentance, no room for pardon, if you once offend. You have two ways before you.—One will enable you to be useful in the world, without great trouble to yourself; it will crown your labors with success; it will bring you to reputation and esteem; it will put you into a way of making a decent provision for your family, and giving a good education to those two fine children God has blessed you with, and you may have many more.

The *other* will itself fatigue you with many difficulties, and expose you to the most fatal consequences; it will draw on you an insupportable load of infamy, as a disturber of the church, and an enemy to the orthodox faith, and in all probability, end in the extreme poverty and ruin of yourself and family. Which God forbid should ever be the case of one, who has no other views but to dedicate his life to God's service.

I am, sir, your faithful humble servant.

CONCLUSION.—After all that has been said in this long letter, I am persuaded that many readers will still think what is here advanced, a strange paradox; or perhaps be scandalized at it, as a very wicked one; and will on no terms allow, that clergymen should lay aside what ought to be their chief study. And, to be ingenuous, I will confess I am entirely of the same mind. I am as unwilling as they can be, to admit the conclusion, that the study of the scriptures should be deserted; and yet cannot deny, but, humanly speaking, this must be the consequence from these premises. If therefore we will not allow the conclusion, we must show the premises to be untrue, and that this study will not be attended with so much danger. But this we in vain attempt, if we do not our parts at least, that these may not be the consequences. For, as long as they are, the study of the Scriptures will certainly continue to be neglected, as it now is; and all men, who contribute to these consequences in any degree, do so far discourage the study of the scriptures, whatever they pretend.

In truth, there is nothing more absurd, than to say the glorious things we do daily of the scriptures; and, at the same time, make the study of them, to men of sincere and honest minds, so extremely hazardous and inconvenient. If then we would not be guilty of discouraging a study which we acknowledge to be the great duty of the clergy, as we are christians; if we would be true to the fundamental principles of the reformation, as protestants, that the scriptures are the only rule of faith; let us use our best endeavors to remove the great obstacles that lie against the study of them; let us do what we can, that learned men may have full liberty to study the scriptures freely and impartially; good encouragement given them to go through the labor and difficulties of such a study, not slightly and superficially, but with such application and diligence as the nature of the thing requires; and have leave to speak their sense with all manner of safety: that their opinions may be examined fairly, and with temper; that their names be not unjustly loaded with calumny and slander; that their words and actions may be interpreted with the same candor, as is shown to those that differ from them; that, if what they advance be right, it may be received; if wrong, their errors may be refuted, as the mistakes of learned men on other subjects; if doubtful, and the scriptures say so little, or speak so obscurely, that nothing can certainly be decided either way; that then nobody may be obliged to take either side as necessary; that, whether their notion be right or wrong, their persons may, in all events, be safe, and their maintenance not affected by it; that, as long as they live virtuously, and write with all due modesty and good manners, and advance nothing that breaks in upon morality and government, they may be treated in all respects as those are or ought to be, who employ themselves in any other part of useful learning.

I must add, let them be never so much in the wrong, I can apprehend no danger from it to the church; or that the errors of a few men can have considerable influence in opposition to a great body of a vigilant and learned clergy, who will be always able and ready to defend the received notions, if they can be defended; and, if they cannot, it must be allowed they ought not. But, if some inconveniences would arise from the liberty I contend for, they are nothing in comparison of those that must follow from the want of it.

Till there is such a liberty allowed to clergymen; till there is such a security for their reputations, fortunes and persons; I fear I must add, till so difficult a study meets with proportionable encouragement; it is impossible a sincere, impartial, and laborious application to it should generally prevail; and, till it does, it is as impossible the scriptures should be well understood; and, till they are, they are a rule of faith in name only. For it is not the words of scripture, but the sense, which is the rule; and, so far as that is not understood, so far the scriptures are not our rule, whatever we pretend; but the sense that men have put on them; men fallible as ourselves, and who were by no means so well furnished, as the learned at present are, with the proper helps to find out the true meaning of scripture. And while we take the sense of the scriptures in this manner upon content, and see not with our own eyes, we insensibly relapse into the principles of popery, and give up the only ground on which we can justify our separation from the church of Rome.—It was a right to study and judge of the scriptures for themselves, that our first reformers asserted with so good effect; and their successors can defend their adherence to them, on no other principle.

If then we are concerned for the study of the scriptures, farther than in words; if we in earnest think them the only rule of faith; let us act as if we thought so; let us heartily encourage a free and impartial study of them; let us lay aside that malignant, arbitrary, persecuting, popish spirit; let us put no fetters on men's understandings, nor any other bounds to their inquiries, but what God and truth have set. Let us, if we would not give up the protestant principle, that the scriptures are plain and clear in the necessary articles, declare nothing to be necessary, but what is clearly revealed in them.

Then may we hope to see the study of these divine books so happily cultivated by the united labors of the learned, when under no discouragements, that all may, in the main, agree in the true meaning of them. Places, that can be understood, they will agree in understanding alike; such at least as are of consequence to the faith. And, for such as are too obscure to be cleared up with any certainty, those likewise they will agree about and unanimously confess they are such as no article of faith can be grounded upon, or proved from. Next to the understanding a text of scripture, is to know it cannot be certainly understood. When the clear and dark parts of scripture are thus distinguished, an unity may then reasonably be hoped for among protestants in necessary points; and a difference of opinion, in such as are not necessary, can have no manner of ill consequence, nor any way disturb the peace of the church; since there will then be nothing left in its doctrines, to inflame men's passions, or feed their corrupt interests, when we are all agreed about what is essential to religion; and what is not essential is looked on as indifferent, so that a man may take one side, or the other, or neither, or may change, as he sees reason, without offence.

Upon the whole, a free and impartial study of the scriptures either ought to be encouraged, or it ought not. There is no medium; and therefore those who are against one side, which ever it be, are necessarily the espousers of the other. Those who think it ought not to be encouraged, will, I hope, think it no injury to be thought to defend their opinion upon such reasons as have been here brought for it, till they give better. On the other hand, those who think these reasons inconclusive, and cannot find better, will find themselves obliged to confess, that such a study ought to be encouraged; and consequently must take care how they are accessory to such practices, as in their natural consequence cannot but tend to its discouragement; lest they come into the condemnation of those who love darkness rather than light; there is, in this case, no other medium between encouraging and discouraging, but what there is between light and darkness. Every degree of

darkness is a want of so much light ; and all want of light is a certain degree of darkness. To refuse then a greater degree of light, where it can be had, is, in truth, to prefer darkness ; which, in my humble opinion, can never be reasonable or excusable. Those, who are of another mind, plainly distrust themselves or their cause. Which if it can bear the light, why should it not be shown in it ? But, if it cannot, it is not the cause of God, or of the Son of God ; for God is light, and in him is no darkness ; and the Son of God is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

COMMUNICATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

Dear Sir,—Something of a dispute has arisen in this quarter about the true meaning of the Greek word *Hades*, which is translated, sometimes Hell, and sometimes the Grave, in our Bible. I contend that the word, in a literal sense, means the grave ; but, in a figurative sense, a state of mental darkness, sorrow &c., in this world. To convince me that my opinion is erroneous, a Rev. clergyman, in this vicinity, kindly loaned me a book called "Campbell's four Gospels," assuring me of his entire confidence in Dr. Campbell's correctness in his exposition of the word in question. In return for this kindness, I wish through the medium of your impartial and useful paper, to show the Rev. gentleman, and others who confide in learned men, such as Dr. Campbell, that said Dr. Campbell has refuted himself, in his remarks on the word *Hades*. In the first place Dr. C. insists that *Hades* ought never to be rendered hell ; "at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by christians." He says, "it appears, at present, to be the prevailing opinion among critics, that the term, at least in the Old Testament, means no more than *keber*, grave or sepulchre." This opinion Dr. C. disputes, and contends that it means the state of souls, both good and bad, between the death of the body and the resurrection. (Here I would request common readers to consider a moment. They will please to observe, that Dr. C. tells us that critics are generally agreed that *Hades*, which is the hell in which the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torments, means nothing more than grave, or sepulchre. They will therefore perceive, that critics in general are agreed that the pretence of the clergy, that this hell is a place of torment after the death of the body, is all sheer imposture ; and they will give their clergy, who keep them in ignorance of this subject, what credit they please for thus imposing upon them.) Dr. C., being in opposition to critics in general in supposing that *hades* (hell) means something more than barely grave, or sepulchre, and that it means both the paradise of good souls, and the misery of bad souls, between death and the resurrection, we will just note one or two of his arguments, and see how he succeeds in supporting his hypothesis. In the first place, Dr. Campbell ought not to have proceeded one step in this business on mere supposition. He ought not to have supposed that souls are in a state of conscious existence between death and the resurrection, but to have proved this to be the case. Instead of doing this, he has labored at great length to prove that *hades* is indicative of the conscious state of souls after death, and then drops a few words, and a few only, on the question whether there be any such conscious existence to souls or no. He acknowledges that the arguments of such men as "that excellent divine, Dr. Law, the Bishop of Carlisle, though they have not convinced him, [that there is no conscious state between death and the resurrection] have sometimes caused him perplexity by their reasoning." Had the Dr. attended as much to the reasoning of St. Paul, in the 15th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, as he appears to have done to that of Dr. Law and others, I think he must have not been perplexed, but convinced, that Paul believed in no such intermediate state. Paul argues the

resurrection of the dead, on the ground that Christ, the first fruits, had risen ; and that, if there be no resurrection of the dead, they that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished. Now if there were an intermediate state, where the souls of those who had fallen asleep in Christ were enjoying that part of *hades*, or hell, which Dr. C. calls paradise, from the death of the body until the resurrection, must not Paul have been incorrect in saying they had perished, even tho' the resurrection should not be true ? Certainly. Therefore, if Paul was correct in his views, there is no conscious existence of souls between the death of the body and the resurrection ; and so all Dr. C's., labors, to prove that *hades* indicates such a state, are futile and nugatory. But I promised to make it appear that Dr. C. has refuted himself. This he has done in what little he has said against the opinion that there is no conscious existence of the soul in the intermediate state supposed. He quotes Paul's words to the Corinthians, as follows : "Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord ; we are willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord." The Dr. asks, "Could such expressions have been used by him [Paul] if he had held it impossible to be with the Lord, or indeed any where, without the body ?" The Dr. goes on to maintain that Paul's opinion must have been, that he should be immediately with the Lord when his body should die. He says in Paul's epistle to the Philippians "the commencement of his presence with the Lord is represented as coincident, not with his return to the body," (meaning at the resurrection) "but with his leaving it ; with the dissolution, not with the restoration of the union."

Now here, I say, Dr. C. has refuted himself, and that as plainly as any thing can be refuted ; for, if the souls of men both good and bad, are to be in a conscious state of existence in *hades*, between death and the resurrection, then the soul of Paul was destined to that place, immediately on the death of his body. Whereas Dr. C. contends that he expected to be immediately with Christ. But Christ as it happens, was not in *hades* at that time. He had risen, and his soul was not left in *hades*—so says Peter. See Acts 2d chapter. Dr. C. has previously noticed what Peter says about Christ's having risen from *hades*, and has maintained that his soul was delivered from that supposed intermediate state.

Thus when Dr. C. has Christ, not in the intermediate but the resurrection state, he has Paul in the intermediate state, with Christ ! So much for the inconsistency of learned men. If people, instead of going to such learned men to be taught, would go to Christ, or to those who are taught of Christ, and receive nothing but what is consistent, I am sure they would reject the notion of an intermediate state, and many other dogmas which have no support in the Bible.

JOHN BROOKS.

Bernardston, Oct. 10, 1823.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

BERNARDSTON, (MASS.) OCT. 7, 1823.

Agreeably to previous arrangements, Brs. David Ballou, H. H. Winchester, and John Brooks, appeared to perform the services of Dedicating the Meeting-House, erected and finished, the present season, by the First Universalist Society in said Bernardston. One or two other brethren in the ministry were expected on the occasion, but failed of attending. The exercises commenced at half past 10 o'clock, A. M., and were performed in the following order.

1. The divine blessing on the services of the day was invoked, by Br. John Brooks.
2. Select portions of scripture, read by the same.
3. Sacred Music.
4. Dedicatory prayer, by Br. Ballou.
5. Sacred Music.
6. Sermon, by Br. Brooks.—Text Mat. 12. 6.—"But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple."
7. Prayer and benediction, by Br. Winchester.

In the afternoon Br. John Brooks was ordained to the

work of the Ministry of reconciliation. The parts of this service were performed as follows :

1. Sacred Music. 2. Prayer, by Br. Ballou. 3. Sacred Music. 4. Sermon, by Br. Winchester.—Text Psalms 119 99.—“*I have more understanding than all my teachers ; for thy testimonies are my meditation.*” 5. Prayer, by the same. 6. Charge and delivery of the scriptures, by Br. Ballou. 7. Right hand of fellowship, by Br. Winchester. 8. Prayer, by Br. Brooks. 9. Sacred Music. 10. Benediction.

The weather being favorable a large concourse of people attended, and they appeared to be well satisfied with the performances of the day. It rejoices the heart to learn that some, who had never before heard the testimony of such as “labor and suffer reproach because they trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe,” were ready to assent to the truth of what they heard. It is hoped that not a few, by casting off the fear of men, and the yoke of ignominious bondage, and by attending, like David, to the divine testimonies, will acquire more understanding than all their teachers. Let them expect, if they do this, that they will be rejected as heretics, and have their names cast out as evil ; but, notwithstanding this, let them glory that they are accounted worthy, like their Lord and Master, to suffer in the glorious cause of truth and righteousness. “Call no man your master upon the earth, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.”

Through divine goodness, and kindly propitiation, the Universalist Society in Bernardston have been enabled to accomplish their utmost reasonable desires, in undertaking, prosecuting and finishing, the work of a neat, modest, comfortable and convenient edifice, which is now devoted and dedicated to the purposes of religious instruction and social worship.

As they have reared this temple in order and harmony, so may they be reared up an holy temple in the Lord.

May God be pleased to inspire those who are of the faith of Abraham in other places, with a disposition to go and do likewise.

There are many societies of such believers who are able to accomplish the undertaking, and to have the gospel preached among them, who now suffer themselves, and their families, to remain destitute of the great privilege.

Let such societies, according to their numbers and means, build themselves comfortable houses for public worship, and they will soon be satisfied that the ravings of their enemies will subside ; or, if not, that they will be poured forth with far less sensible effect than what has hitherto been the case.

A FRIEND TO GOSPEL LIBERTY.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

TOLERATION,—IN FORMER TIMES.

It is not altogether unprofitable, occasionally to recur to former periods, and see what the state of society has been, and the sentiments which have prevailed among those who have gone before us. It is in this way only, that we can determine whether the state of society is stationary, or whether it is progressive in knowledge and intelligence, in humanity and virtue. It is sometimes worthwhile to inquire, whether we are wiser or better than our ancestors. Two centuries have passed away since the “Pilgrims” as they have been called, first settled on these shores of New England. They fled from persecution at home ; this is admitted by all,—they encountered great hardships and perils ; the wide wilderness of this new world was before them, rugged, bleak and inhospitable, its only inhabitants were the untamed and untaught savages, who roamed the wilderness in common with the wild beasts, co-tenants of the forest. Civilization had not crossed the mighty wa-

ters, and the savage if he knew not its blessings, was a stranger to its evils ; superstition had not established her gloomy dominions here, she had not erected her altars nor instituted her priesthood ; there was neither edifices, nor temples, parties, nor sectarians, but every thing was in a state of nature.

Such was the country which the Pilgrims selected as an asylum from persecution, and for the enjoyment of the inestimable privilege of worshipping their God in a way that they deemed right and conformable to the oracles of truth. Their religious zeal has never been doubted, and who can doubt their sincerity : if their piety should be thought fallacious, they were undoubtedly conscientious. What people have exhibited greater perseverance or made greater sacrifices for the enjoyment of religious liberty ?

In England they were called *Puritans*, on account of their pretensions to great sanctity of life and strictness in religious observances. Their devotions were characterized by sanctimoniousness and sincerity ; they worshiped if not with joy, without wearisomeness ; held long meetings preached long sermons and made long prayers. These and all the peculiarities which characterised them in England they brought with them, on their migration to this country ; yet nevertheless, their character experienced a great revolution. They were no longer the subjects of persecution ; but this was not the most material change—they became *themselves persecutors*. What, the men who had fled from persecution, who had suffered so much, exposed themselves to perils by sea and land, for the enjoyment of the rights of conscience, the moment they acquire power become persecutors themselves ! Was this fact in any degree doubtful, we, as their descendants, as well as from a respect to their well-meant, and persevering piety, ought to refuse to credit it. But its truth rests on too high authority to admit of a shadow of doubt. And was there but a few instances of persecution, however well authenticated those might be, we might with plausibility ascribe it to some local and temporary infatuation. But the case does not admit of this mitigation ; were we to do this, the blood of the poor Quakers, scourged and banished, would reproach us of an equal want of feeling for their unmerited sufferings and of respect to the authority of truth. It was not a few instances of persecution only, but a settled policy of intolerance and violence, proceeding from a spirit of blind bigotry and furious zeal. Not only was the liberty of conscience disregarded, but the sacred rights of humanity outraged in the most shameful manner. Not only the Quakers and Anabaptists, but others charged with being schismatics and those suspected of witchcraft were the unfortunate victims of this blind spirit of persecution. Many were scourged, mutilated and dragged at the tail of carts from one town to another.

We would gladly throw a veil, and a thick one, over these things, but the cause of truth and humanity forbid it ; and we may add, the sacred cause of religion forbids it. It is common to profess great veneration for the character and piety of the Pilgrims of New England. As they were our ancestors, we ought to feel a proper veneration for their memory ; and every one must respect their hardy and persevering character, their bold and adventurous spirit, and their patience and fortitude. But can a *christian* or philanthropist, venerate their piety ? If he commends their religion, must he not commend the *bitter fruits* which it produced ? He cannot separate the cause from the effect ; he cannot consider the fountain sweet when the stream is bitter, nor the tree fair when the fruit is noxious. We may give them credit for a sincere but mistaken zeal, but can go no farther in their praise on the score of piety. How are those to be understood, who bestow such unequalled panegyrics on the religion of the Pilgrims ? Would they wish to see their religion and spiritual light revived ? would they wish to have the reign of witchcraft restored, the punishment of heretics renewed ; and the blue-laws re-enacted ? Is there any admirer of the piety of the

Pilgrims enthusiastic or bold enough to avow this? If not then let him cease his admiration of that blind and furious zeal which produced injustice, violence and bloodshed. We trust at the present day, it is no longer a question whether that spirit which produces such fruits as these is from God or is the spirit of christianity. Murder and bloodshed although committed in the name of God and religion, now, are not the less considered as crimes.

I have been led to these reflections by looking into a pamphlet published about the year 1745, entitled "A view of the Difference between the CHURCH OF CHRIST and the Established Churches in the Colony of Connecticut." It contains many curious things, which shew, what manner of spirit prevailed at a period no more distant. It gives an account of two Students of Yale College, being expelled on account of their attending a religious meeting not "authorised and allowed by the laws of the Colony." I extract the record of a judgment rendered by a Justice of the Peace, against Solomon Paine who was a Separatist, for preaching, contrary, as it was said, to the "good and wholesome laws of this Colony."

"At a Court holden at Windham, the 22d day of September, A. D. 1744, for trial of small causes: Present, Nathaniel Huntington, Justice of the Peace. Elisha Paine of Canterbury, in the County of Windham, being brought before this Court by virtue of a Writ, dated the 10th day of Aug. A. D. 1744, and in the Eighteenth Year of His Majesty's Reign, to answer unto the Presentment of Eleazer Palmer of Windham, one of the Grand Jurors of our Lord the King, for the County of Windham. Dated at Windham, the 17th day of April A. D. 1744: who upon Oath presents. That Elisha Paine of Canterbury in said County, who is not a settled and ordained Minister, did on the 10th day of April, A. D. 1744, go into the Third Parish in Windham, in the County aforesaid, and in said Parish, in the House of Benjamin Cleaveland, there said Paine did publicly preach and exhort in matters of Religion, both as to Doctrine and Practice, to a great number of people then present, that were notified many days before the said Paine was to preach at said Cleaveland's house as before mentioned, as by said Presentment on File may appear: the said Paine confess'd the Facts, and pleaded that this Court hath not Jurisdiction of this Case, as on file, &c.†

"This Court having considered the Plea of the Prisoner, do judge them insufficient, and say, That this Court hath Jurisdiction of this Case, and the said Paine refused to make any other Plea; whereupon it is considered by this Court, that the said Elisha Paine shall become bound to the Treasurer of the County of Windham, in a recognizance of One Hundred Pounds lawful money, to his peaceable and good behaviour, that he the said Paine will not again offend in the like kind between this time, and the sitting of the County Court, to be holden at Windham, in and for the County of Windham, on the second Tuesday of December next, and then appear at said Court on said day, and take up his Bond, unless the Court shall see cause to continue the same, and pay cost of this prosecution, and stand committed until Bond is given. Cost allowed, Two

† "Windham ss. Sept. 22, 1744. At a Justices Court.

Present, Nathanael Huntington, Justice of Peace.

"And now the Prisoner at the Bar being brought before this Court for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and exhorting a number of people (as Presentment) pleads, That this Court hath not Jurisdiction of this case; for that the facts complained of, are warranted by the Law of God and the King, and therefore not triable by any Court or Law inferior thereto; and this he is ready to verify judgment.

ELISHA PAINE.

The above written is a true Copy, as on File.

Test.

N. Huntington, Justice of Peace.

Pounds Thirteen Shillings Old-Tenor Bills. That said Paine refused to give Bond as above-mentioned, or any ways to comply with the Judgment, and was committed the Day and Year above-written.

NATHANAEL HUNTINGTON,
Justice of Peace."

What would be said at the present day, if a man should be indicted, and tried for the crime of preaching the gospel, and ordered to give bonds for his good behaviour and on failure thereof should be committed to prison like a common felon? But suppose a man was to be tried and convicted of heresy and sentenced to be tied to the tail of a cart and flogged from one town to another. Would such deeds be thought an evidence of piety and a becoming zeal for the glory of God? If they would be wicked and impious now, they were not, considered in the abstract, the less so a century ago, as the nature of things and the natural rights of mankind have not changed. The opinions of society however, have undergone a mighty change; truth, which at that time, if perceived at all, was seen as through a cloud darkly, now shines, comparatively with the effulgence and splendour of the meridian Sun. That darkness, thicker than Egyptian, of which witchcraft and heresy were the offspring, with their concomitant train of evils, has nearly disappeared. We are apt to think the progress of truth is slow; but when we look back no farther than half a century, we perceive it has been astonishingly rapid; so much so, that her votaries have abundant reason to be satisfied with what has been done, and with the bright prospect that the work will progress until the cause of piety shall be identified with that of humanity, and until the rights of the human race, shall be fully understood and universally respected.

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, November 1, 1823.

As the present Number closes the Second Volume of the RELIGIOUS INQUIRER, the Editor feels it his duty to return his unfeigned thanks to the patrons of the paper for the liberal support which it has received; and to lay before them a general summary of the events which have transpired the year past in the religious and moral world, that have come within his notice.

In the first instance we notice the rapid progress with which the doctrine of divine truth is advancing in this our happy country, producing terror and dismay in the ranks of those who have long been enemies to religious liberty, and of free inquiry. Every man of science must be sensible that it is, to the free and unshackled exercise of the mind, we are indebted for those invaluable discoveries and improvements, which have immortalized a LOCKE, a NEWTON, a FRANKLIN and many others.

Theology is taught as a science in our seminaries of learning as much as Philosophy and Mathematics, why then may it not be capable of improvement as well as any other branch of science. By improvement we mean the attainment of more correct and enlarged views of the nature and character of the infinitely wise Creator and Governor of the universe, by whom all things were made, and in whom all things exist. Theology signifies that science which treats of the being and attributes of God, his relation to us, the dispensation of his providence, his will with respect to our actions, and his purposes with respect to our end. A science of such importance, surely demands, if any branch of science can demand, the free unbiassed exercise of the human mind, in searching after truth. However self-evident this fact is, to every unprejudiced mind not governed by partial and interested notions, yet it is the case that even in this day of boasted moral and religious light and scientific knowledge, there are men proud

of their literary acquirements, and who possess and influence over the public mind that are the enemies, and opposers of free inquiry, and who exert themselves in every way possible to prevent people from hearing any other doctrine save that which they preach, or reading any writings which are not from their pen or approved by them.

When therefore these men behold a liberal spirit which leads to a free and candid investigation, on those momentous subjects that relate to the will of God in respect to our actions, and his purposes in respect to our end, gaining ground in the world, we cannot be surprised at their anxiety, nor that they should redouble their energies to stop its progress.

Were the influence of the doctrine of God's universal benevolence confined among those who are without the pale of the several churches, there would not be so much alarm; but it is felt in all the churches, and though many from various motives keep silent on the subject, and like Naaman the Syrian, worship to please their master, a God in whom they do not believe, and professedly embrace a doctrine their souls abhor, yet there are some noble and independent minds who love the praises of God more than the esteem of men, and who, like Paul the faithful servant of Christ, give up all, yea, popularity, friends and all for their redeemer's sake, are willing to suffer persecution, and reproach for the truth of God, and publicly to acknowledge their belief in the universal benevolence and mercy of God. For this, several have been excommunicated from the different churches, their only fault being their belief that God was equally good to all his rational intelligent offspring, not a word being said against their moral conduct, or being charged with the violation of any church covenant aside from that article of faith. Nor has the operation of the spirit of divine grace been stayed within the church; several preachers have been taught as was Peter; that of a truth, God is no respecter of persons, and also to call no man common or unclean; and like Saul of Tarsus the scales of superstitious ignorance have fallen from their eyes, and they have come to the knowledge of this true and faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and have been made willing to labor and suffer reproach, trusting in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe.

In the past year we have been hailed with good news from every quarter of our beloved country. Liberal sentiments prevail, and the power of benevolence and heaven born charity is felt and exercised by thousands and tens of thousands who have heretofore thought it criminal to suffer charity to look beyond the line that encircled a peculiar church or society. NINE Houses for public worship have been dedicated, and as far as we have received returns, TWENTY-ONE new societies have united in fellowship, and EIGHTEEN brethren have entered into the work of the ministry. We deem it necessary to notice the manner in which the opposition, to what we consider the cause of truth, is conducted. In doing this it is proper that the reader should keep in mind, that as professors of religion, and believers in the scriptures which are considered the oracles of TRUTH, the doctrine we advocate is predicated upon the divine testimony, and to it we are willing to refer, and by it to stand or fall. To the test of scripture we are willing to submit the sentiments we labor to propagate, and we are disposed at all times to enter into a friendly discussion on all points in which we differ from our brethren. The subject is of too much importance to be trifled with. Life and immortality too much to be risked for the pleasures of a moment, or to be sacrificed for the honors or riches this world can bestow. We have no disposition to propagate error, or to delude and deceive our fellow men; we have therefore invited an investigation, being willing to appeal to the law and the testimony of God, and have offered the columns of the Inquirer to the service of any one who would undertake to convince us of our errors. Our brother editors, engaged in the same

cause with us, have manifested the same liberal spirit, and have ever been ready to publish, and to meet with fair and candid argument whatever could be brought against the doctrine of Universal benevolence.

This investigation has been refused, under the pretence that time was too precious to waste in controversy. We would ask, can that portion of time be wasted which is spent in convincing a fellow being of his errors, especially if the belief in a falsehood will cause his eternal damnation? Or do they think that it is impossible to convert a Universalist? This they cannot believe, as they frequently boast of the conversion of Universalists. It will be difficult to convince men of discerning minds that it is useless to enter into a discussion of those interesting subjects which relate to the will and purposes of God, in respect to the final destiny of man. If the scriptures contain a revelation of the mind and will of God, if his Divine purposes are there made known, then can the truth of God be supported and defended by that word which reveals and declares the TRUTH. If there is any thing for man to believe, the belief of which brings salvation to the soul, and this truth is made known to us in the record which God hath given of his Son, then is that TRUTH capable of demonstration, and no doctrine, or gospel beside the doctrine of truth can be supported on the authority of the scriptures. We repeat it, there is a system of truth revealed in the scriptures, and amply supported by numerous testimonies which are full and incontrovertible in demonstrating the will of God in respect to our actions, and his purposes in respect to our ultimate end. This doctrine, and this only can be proved by the Bible, which is the only criterion by which we are willing to determine the truth. Whoever is willing to try the merits of the opposite doctrines in which we may believe by the word of truth, him will we hear with patience and candour; but we will not listen to dreams, oldwives fables, nor those absurd, and abusive stories, of the "Effects of Universalism,"—"Conversion of a Universalist" &c. &c.

Avoiding all rational argument or scriptural investigation of the doctrine advocated in the Inquirer, all means has been used, by secret influence to prevent people from hearing the doctrine preached, or reading the writings of Universalists. This indeed, was necessary to preserve the reputation of those who publicly misrepresent the doctrine, and labor to charge us with believing in those gross absurdities which no man of sense possessed of a knowledge of the scriptures, could possibly believe. It is then to be expected that those cunning and designing men who have wickedly vilified the truth, would exert themselves to prevent the people from hearing or reading lest their deeds should be exposed. In this is verified the words of the Saviour "And this is the condemnation, that light is come unto the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

Avoiding all investigation, the opposition has been confined to violent philippics against the doctrine we publish to the world, loud anathemas in the pulpit, great exertions to produce revivals, and the publication of stories without the least foundation or shadow of truth. We say, stories destitute of truth, because we feel satisfied that if these stories were true the names of persons and places would have been given, especially when the authenticity of the story has been questioned, and the names of persons called for. The Christian Secretary gave to the world an account of a young man who after trying to believe in this, and that doctrine: who had tried to be a Universalist. Deist &c. but whose versatile and unstable mind could not rest upon any thing rational or consistent, at last was charmed with the sublime and glorious doctrine of predestination and total depravity as to prepare himself for a

Baptist preacher. This youth is considered as a converted Universalist, although he never believed it any more than John Calvin did. To help the story out, this hopeful youth is made to converse with a Universalist preacher, relating to him his doubts and fears, when lo, the preacher possesses all these corroding doubts himself, and frankly acknowledges that all Universalists have these fears but strive to banish them. We have in a friendly manner called upon the editor or editors of that paper for the names of the young man and the Universalist preacher. nay, we have notified them we would be satisfied with the name of the preacher. Our invitation has been passed in silence. We had two reasons for calling on the Secretary for the names of the persons mentioned in this story. *First.* If the story were true, every Universalist preacher, yea, and every believer of that doctrine was implicated in the declaration which it is said this preacher made. The editor of this paper stands charged with dishonesty in preaching and advocating, by means of the press, doctrines, of the truth of which he has serious doubts; for the man who would preach a doctrine of the truth of which he is not fully convinced, is a knave and a deceitful hypocrite, destitute of reflection and understanding, in that he attempts to teach others, that which he is not persuaded is true, or of the truth of which he has serious doubts. The editor of the Inquirer therefore as a man of feeling, having a reputation for sincerity and truth at stake, could not, in duty to himself and the societies to which he preaches, remain silent, it was his indispensable duty to call for the name of the preacher alluded to, that he alone might bear the stigma of preaching what he did not believe, or that, of which he was not fully convinced. It was therefore the duty of the editor of the Secretary to give the name or names required, in justice to the editor of this paper, and his brethren who are all, with him, implicated.

Secondly. As the story was believed to be false, and as it was supposed that the editor of the Secretary had been imposed upon, the call, for the names of those concerned, gave the editor the opportunity of exonerating himself from any charge of dishonesty in the affair, by publishing what he knew to be false to subserve party purposes. It was believed that the editor would readily avail himself of the opportunity to show that he had a just regard for the truth, and possessed that integrity of heart and nobleness of mind, which are characteristics of the christian, which disdains to carry a point by means disgraceful, and calculated to impeach the character of those who use them. That the editor of the Secretary has had it in his power to give us the names required, we are fully persuaded, for to our knowledge 'PEREGRINUS,' the author of the story, has been in town more than once. As therefore he has refused our reasonable request, he must pardon us if we publicly declare the story a falsehood, and leave it with him to bear the reproach of using unjustifiable measures to oppose a doctrine which he was sensible he could not oppose with success by more honourable means.

Several back handed thrusts which have been made at the doctrine we profess, in the Secretary, have called forth replies and animadversions in the Inquirer. This has excited some unpleasant feelings, and has led to the inquiry in the secret conclave "what have we said or done, that the Inquirer should be continually noticing us." If the editor and publishers of that paper, will, in the face of the world, declare that they have neither directly nor indirectly touched upon Universalism, and endeavoured by side thrusts to destroy the influence of the doctrine, then will we acknowledge ourselves out of the way in noticing that paper, and confess that we are ignorant of the English language.

The different religious papers in opposition to Universalism have been made the vehicles of abuse, and most foolish and absurd tales have been propagated in them. We are willing our enemies should avail themselves of every means in their power to stay the progress of a doctrine they believe to be false, or of pernicious tendency, but

surely the cause of God, and his Christ requires the aid of truth, not of falsehood to support it. That cause must be desperate indeed that has not truth for its aid, and is driven to seek support in the propagation of absurd and foolish tales. Great then must be the evidence the Universalist possesses of the truth of the doctrine in which he believes. The opposers of his faith are unwilling, we may say unable, to contend against the doctrine with fair and honourable weapons, such as scripture and reason afford, but resort to means that must be despised by every man of honorable feeling; such as hunting up some poor, miserable and profligate character, who either lives an object of pity and commiseration, wallowing in the pollution of profanity and intoxication, or who has died miserably in his wickedness, and calling this man a Universalist, consider his depravity the "Effects of Universalism" and measure the character of the whole denomination by him. Should each denomination of professing christians be measured in this way, and the doctrine in which they believe be denounced as of "fatal tendency" because some of its members were immoral men, there would be no system of doctrine in our world that might not be called "pernicious" and of "fatal tendency." Notwithstanding the exertions which have been made to stay the progress of Universalism, it flourishes beyond the most sanguine expectations of its friends. Societies are continually multiplying, and the Lord is almost daily calling forth laborers into his vineyard. At no period was the cause of truth more flourishing than at the present, although its opposers are insinuating that it is on the decline, and would excite a belief among the less informed, that Universalism like Jonah's gourd, sprang up in a night and is perishing as rapidly.

The prosperity we enjoy may in some measure be attributed to the many publications in circulation which as the *Heralds* and messengers of Salvation bear the glad tidings of great joy to every section of the United States, and thus furnish the means of information to thousands, who without their aid might long have remained in ignorance of that grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men, and who would yet have been grovelling in the darkness of superstition under the impression that God was a being "revengeful, passionate and unjust, and an eternal enemy to thousands of the souls which he has made.

There are in circulation TEN periodical papers published by Universalists, each of which on an average issues one thousand papers—making the amount of ten thousand which are put into the hands of persons in every part of our country.* In addition to which the increase of preachers who are continually employed, gives facility to the spreading of Gospel truth.

The editor congratulates the readers of the Inquirer on this auspicious state of things, and pledges himself that every exertion shall be made on his part to render the THIRD volume worthy of their patronage. To this faithfulness he will be stimulated by the prosperous state of things, and the full belief that his labors will be amply rewarded, by the knowledge of divine truth, which he humbly hopes this paper will be the means of conveying to many doubting minds, and those yet enemies to God's universal grace by reason of the blindness of their minds.

* At the request of several of our subscribers who are desirous of knowing the number of papers printed at this office, we state, that SEVENTEEN HUNDRED are printed semi-monthly; FOURTEEN HUNDRED of which are regularly distributed, widely circulating in almost every State in the Union.

MRS. JUDSON'S VISITING DRESS.

The statement, which appeared in the "New-England Galaxy," and from thence copied into several other papers, respecting the visiting dress of Mrs. Judson, the wife of a celebrated Missionary in India, which was said to have cost

TWELVE HUNDRED DOLLARS, has excited the attention of the Baptist Missionary Society, in Boston, and they have in consequence thereof appointed a committee, consisting of some of the most respectable clergymen of the order, to inquire into the facts. The committee, after due examination, have reported the story to be false; that there was no particular extravagance in her dress, and that the principal articles which she wore were presented to her by persons interested in the cause of Missions.

✂ EXCOMMUNICATION. ✂

On Sunday afternoon last, (Sept. 14.) a boy was excommunicated from a Sunday School in this city, in due form, and with a loud and terrible voice, for the awful crime of not going to church in the forenoon.—The scholars were charged to hold no manner of intercourse with the vile boy, who had not been to meeting. A hearer represents the scene to have been one of true ecclesiastical grandeur, and partaking of the root and essence of pious tyranny. It therefore appears, that the correction of habits which are a real injury, and the enlightening of the understanding of the party, is not the design. It is to coerce the children to become partisans to the creeds of men, and to perpetuate the present state of things in the religious world. Some of the schools may be conducted properly; but we express an opinion, that our city or country will not be benefitted by the exercise of *petty tyranny*; nor the morals of the community be hedged in by threats of fire and brimstone.—[N. Y. Gospel Herald.

REMARKS.

God in infinite wisdom, appears to have left our Calvinist friends to themselves, that they might fill up the measure of their iniquity, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. They seem to be in a state of complete darkness, unable to profit by experience or to be taught by those passing events that hurl tyrants from their thrones, and repays the infuriated bigot in coin of his own invention. Every vestige of liberal feeling is banished from their hearts, and charity has no dwelling in their bosoms. With unrelenting fury they would deprive both old and young, even the helpless female of every right, privilege, or blessing unless they yield obedience to their mandates, receive their dogmas, and cultivate the same bitter and persecuting spirit. How despicable is that conduct which drives a child from school because it has not attended for one half day the services of the church; and what qualifying term shall we apply to that spirit, which for that one fault, if it be a fault, not only deprives a child of the means of education, but also would exclude it from all society, and exert its influence to prevent all communication between social beings, who were formed to love and befriend each other, to be merciful, forgiving, and kind to each other. O! Bigotry thy deeds are deeds of darkness, they are engendered in the depths of Hell!

The time, we trust, is not far distant, when, men who have long submitted to ecclesiastical tyranny and oppression, will arouse from their slumbers, and like Sampson of old, break their fetters, upraise the pillars that support the temple of Orthodoxy, and bury their tyrants in one common ruin. But should their locks have been shorn by age, and the strength of their minds become paralyzed by the intoxicating draught which superstition has administered to them, we look in humble hope to the rising generation, whose independent minds will despise the unhallowed dictation of those, who have enslaved their fathers, and will boldly dare to think for themselves on the momentous subject of religion.

Fearful of this, every attempt has been made, that human ingenuity can devise, to avert the hour of destruction. Hence under the pretence of instructing poor children in the necessary branches of useful literature, sabbath Schools have been got up, while the principle design was to infuse on the youthful mind those sectarian sentiments

taught in orthodox creeds and covenants; thus to throw over the young mind the mantle of darkness, and bind it down in superstitious ignorance. The clergy are sensible of the correctness of the sentiment expressed by the celebrated Pope.

"As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

and exert themselves so to bend the tender shoot, that it shall ever bow under the iron yoke of religious despotism. A few more excommunications however from church and school, will soon open the eyes of the blind, and enable them to discover the iniquity to which they have long submitted, and sensible of this, they will break every yoke and let the oppressed go free.—*Ed. Inq.*

POETRY.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

The Creator seen in his works.—Romans i. 20.

To prove a God most wise,
We need but raise our eyes,
The air, earth, sea and skies
Declare his name:
The mountains clad in green,
The vales which intervene,
With each surrounding scene,
A God proclaim.

The sun, the fount of light,
The moon, that rules by night,
And twinkling stars so bright
A God declare—
(Who, by his sovereign might,
Proclaimed. Let there be light—
Anon both day and night,
By turns appear.)

The lambkins sportive play,
The feather'd songster's lay
And flut'ring insects, gay,
Bespeak his praise—
And e'en the finny tribe,
That through the water glide,
To Him, their praise ascribe,
In silent lays.

Shall man of nobler frame—
Who can the savage tame,
Neglect to praise the name
Of the most High?
The God who hath him made,
Who daily gives him aid—
Shall he his ways upbraid,
And Him deny?

Forbid, Parent divine!
That we should e'er repine
When heavenly mercies shine
Through all thy ways—
But may one gen'ral song
Dwell on our every tongue;
And love the theme prolong,
In notes of praise.

C. B.

NOTICE.

As the *Second Volume* of the Inquirer is brought to a close, we must again remind our Agents and Subscribers of the necessity of their attending to our demands—they will remember that by the terms of the paper, payment is to be made *in advance*; but it must at least be received at the close of the volume. The arrears are now great, considering the amount of receipts, and greater punctuality has become indispensable to the prosperity of the paper.

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